IN THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1-3.   (Canceled)

4.   (Currently Amended) A virtual mall apparatus comprising:

means for virtually constructing a virtual mall including a plurality of virtual shops at which a Mix & Match (M&M) discount is achieved when at least ~~two items~~ one item subject to the M&M discount [[are]] is respectively purchased from at least two different shops;

means for generating a purchased item data when a purchase command is input, the purchase command indicating that a purchaser buys an item at one of the plurality of shops, the purchased item data including a store code identifying one of the virtual shops at which the item is purchased, an item code identifying the item purchased and an M&M discount item flag indicating that the purchased item is an M&M discount item, the M&M discount item flag being set where the purchased item is specified as an M&M discount item by one of the plurality of shops;

means for notifying the purchaser that the purchased item is subject to the M&M discount based on the M&M discount item flag;

means for discriminating whether items indicated by at least two M&M discount item flags in a plurality of purchased item data are respectively purchased from different shops based on the purchased item data; and

means for executing an M&M discount if the discriminating means determines that the items indicated by the at least two M&M discount item flags are purchased from different shops.

5.   (Cancelled)

6.   (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 4 further including means for selecting one item from at least two different items indicated by at least two M&M

discount item flags if the at least two different items indicated by the at least two M&M discount item flags are purchased at the same shop.

7.   (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 6, wherein each item of the at least two different items has a selling price and the selecting means includes means for comparing a selling price of one of the at least two different items with a selling price of the other item to select one item having a higher selling price if selling prices of the at least two different items are different from one another when the M&M discount is performed.

8.   (Currently Amended) A method for performing [[an]] a Mix & Match (M&M) discount service in a virtual mall comprising a plurality of virtual shops when at least two items one item subject to an M&M discount [[are]] is respectively purchased from at least two different shops; including steps of:

generating a purchased item data when a purchase command is input, the purchase command indicating that a purchaser buys an item at one of the plurality of shops, the purchased item data including a store code identifying one of the virtual shops at which the item is purchased, an item code identifying the item purchased and an M&M discount item flag indicating that the purchased item is an M&M discount item, the M&M discount item flag being set where the purchased item is specified as an M&M discount item by one of the plurality of shops;

notifying the purchaser that the purchased item is subject to the M&M discount based on the M&M discount item flag;

discriminating whether items indicated by at least two M&M discount item flags in a plurality of purchased item data are respectively purchased from different shops based on the purchased item data; and

executing an M&M discount if the discriminating means determines that the items indicated by the at least two M&M discount item flags are respectively purchased from different shops.

9.   (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 8 further including step of selecting one item from at least two different items indicated by at least two M&M discount item

flags if the at least two different items indicated by the at least two M&M discount item flags are purchased at the same shop.

10.   (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 9, wherein each item of the at least two different items has a selling price and the selecting step includes step of comparing a selling price of one of the at least two different items and a selling price of the other item to select one item having a higher selling price if prices of at least two different items are different from one another when the M&M discount is performed.

11.   (Currently Amended) A set of computer executable instructions, stored in a computer readable medium, which when executed operates to:

virtually creates a virtual mall including a plurality of virtual shops at which a Mix & Match (M&M) discount is achieved when at least two items one item subject to the M&M discount [[are]] is respectively purchased from at least two different shops;

generates a purchased item data when a purchase command is input, the purchase command indicating that a purchaser buys an item at one of the plurality of shops, the purchased item data including a store code identifying one of the virtual shops at which the item is purchased, an item code identifying the item purchased and an M&M discount item flag indicating that the purchased item is an M&M discount item, the M&M discount item flag being set where the purchased item is specified as an M&M discount item by one of the plurality of shops;

notifies the purchaser that the purchased item is subject to the M&M discount based on the M&M discount item flag;

discriminates whether items indicated by at least two M&M discount item flags in a plurality of purchased item data are respectively purchased from different shops based on the purchased item data; and

executes an M&M discount if the items indicated by the at least two M&M discount item flags are purchased from different shops.

12.   (Previously Presented) The set of computer executable instructions according to claim 11 further selecting one item from at least two different items indicated by at least two

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M&M discount item flags if the at least two different items indicated by the at least two M&M discount item are purchased at the same shop.

13.   (Previously Presented) The set of computer executable instructions according to claim 11, wherein each item of the at least two different items has a selling price, comparing a selling price of one of the at least two different items with a selling price of the other item to select one item having a higher selling price if prices of the at least two different items are different from one another when the M&M discount is performed.

14.   (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 4, wherein the means for notifying the purchaser that the purchased item is subject to the M&M discount further comprises means for notifying the purchaser that the purchaser can get the M&M discount if the purchaser buys at least one other M&M item at a different shop.

15.   (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 8, wherein notifying the purchaser that the purchased item is subject to the M&M discount further comprises notifying the purchaser that the purchaser can get the M&M discount if the purchaser buys at least one other M&M item at different shop.

16.   (Previously Presented) The set of computer executable instructions according to claim 11, wherein notifying the purchaser that the purchased item is subject to the M&M discount further comprises notifying the purchaser that the purchaser can get the M&M discount if the purchaser buys at least one other M&M item at different shop.

17.   (New) A virtual mall apparatus comprising:

means for virtually constructing a virtual mall including a plurality of virtual shops at which a Mix & Max (M&M) discount is achieved when at least one item subject to the M&M discount is respectively purchased from at least two different shops;

means for generating a purchased item data when a purchase command is input, the purchase command indicating that a purchaser buys an item at one of the plurality of shops, the purchased item data including a store code identifying one of the virtual shops at which the item

is purchased, an item code identifying the item purchased and an M&M discount item flag indicating that the purchased item is an M&M discount item, the M&M discount item flag being set where the purchased item is specified as an M&M discount item by one of the plurality of shops;

means for discriminating whether items indicated by at least two M&M discount item flags in a plurality of purchased item data are respectively purchased from different shops based on the purchased item data;

means for selecting one item from at least two different items indicated by at least two M&M discount item flags if the at least two different items indicated by the at least two M&M discount item flags are purchased at the same shop; and

means for executing an M&M discount if the discriminating means determines that the items indicated by the at least two M&M discount item flags are purchased from different shops.